

CLAIMS:

1. For use in conjunction with a video encoding/decoding technique wherein images are encoded using truncatable image-representable signals in bit plane form, the method comprising the steps of:

determining a specified number of bitplanes for the coding of an image-representative frame; and

producing an encoded bitstream for said frame which has a syntax-containing portion that includes a representation of said specified number.

2. The method as defined by claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a decoder for decoding said encoded bitstream.

3. The method as defined by claim 2, further comprising the step of performing conformance testing on said decoder at a conformance level that is a function of said specified number.

4. The method as defined by claim 1, wherein said encoding/decoding technique comprises a fine granularity scaling encoding/decoding technique.

5. The method as defined by claim 3, wherein said encoding/decoding technique comprises a fine granularity scaling encoding/decoding technique.

6. The method as defined by claim 4, wherein said fine granularity scaling encoding/decoding technique is MPEG-4 fine granularity scaling.

7. The method as defined by claim 5, wherein said fine granularity scaling encoding/decoding technique is MPEG-4 fine granularity scaling.

8. The method as defined by claim 1, further comprising repeating said determining and producing steps for a number of frames of a video signal.

9. The method as defined by claim 3, further comprising repeating said determining and producing steps for a number of frames of a video signal.

10. The method as defined by claim 7, further comprising repeating said determining and producing steps for a number of frames of a video signal.

11. For use in conjunction with a video encoding/decoding technique wherein images are encoded using truncatable image-representable signals in bit plane form, and subsequently decoded with a decoder, a method for conformance testing of said decoder, comprising the steps of:

determining a specified number of bitplanes for the coding of an image-representative frame;

producing an encoded bitstream for said frame which has a syntax-containing portion that includes a representation of said specified number; and

performing conformance testing on said decoder at a conformance level that is a function of said specified number.

12. The method as defined by claim 11, wherein said encoding/decoding technique comprises a fine granularity scaling encoding/decoding technique.

13. The method as defined by claim 12, wherein said fine granularity scaling encoding/decoding technique is MPEG-4 fine granularity scaling.

14. The method as defined by claim 11, further comprising repeating said determining and producing steps for a number of frames of a video signal.

15. The method as defined by claim 13, further comprising repeating said determining and producing steps for a number of frames of a video signal.

16. For use in conjunction with an image encoding/decoding technique wherein images are encoded using truncatable image-representable signals in bit plane form, an apparatus comprising:

means for determining a specified number of bitplanes for the coding of an image-representative frame; and

means for producing an encoded bitstream for said frame which has a syntax-containing portion that includes a representation of said specified number.

17. Apparatus as defined by claim 16, further comprising a decoder for decoding said encoded bitstream.